# COMMANDERS DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE • WASHINGTON, D.C.

Vol. 7, No. 15 January 10, 1970


PR PRINCETON JAN 29 ... LIBRARY

RECEIVED DOCUMENTS DIVISION

## 'A Nation in Conflict'

*Nigeria was once considered a model for the young African nations. Today this most populous of the African countries is torn by a bitter civil war. In four years of strife many of her people have been killed, millions made homeless, and untold numbers have died of hunger. "It is tragic enough to watch a military conflict between peoples who once lived together in peace and developing prosperity," President Nixon has said. "But that tragedy has been compounded, and the conscience of the world engaged, by the starvation threatening millions of innocent civilians on both sides of the battle."*

*From the beginning of this conflict, Secretary of State William P. Rogers has pointed out, the U.S. has been at the forefront of international relief efforts for victims on both sides of the battle lines. But "we have steadfastly refrained from any involvement in the conflict itself and sought to avoid interference in its politics."*

*U.S. policy is to support constructive efforts to assist Nigeria in achieving peace, viability and continued development. We support the position of the Organization of African Unity that the Nigerian civil war is a Nigerian and an African problem to be solved by Africans. The policy of the U.S. government is also to avoid any direct military involvement in the Nigerian conflict, and in support of this policy our Government has refused to provide arms to either side.*

**(See Background and U.S. Policy on Pages 3-6)**

## Meet With DoD Official

# Wives of Missing Fliers Review POW Situation

At the end of 1969, the Department of Defense listed more than 1,350 U.S. servicemen as prisoners of war or missing in action as a result of hostilities in Southeast Asia.

What makes the total especially tragic is that more than 900 are listed as missing in action, according to a member of the Defense Prisoner of War Committee.

"That means we have no information on any of these men," said Richard Capen, assistant to the secretary of defense for legislative affairs, and a member of the POW Committee since February 1969.

Two women who reflect the plight of hundreds of wives and parents of servicemen listed as missing in action are Mrs. Katherine Plowman, wife of Lieutenant (junior grade) James Plowman, and Mrs. Candace Parish, wife of Navy Lieutenant Charles Parish.

**Mrs. Plowman:** I heard from my husband by letter March 24, 1967. On March 25, I was notified by the Bureau of Naval Personnel that my husband had been shot down over North Vietnam the previous day. Since that time I have heard nothing. He is listed as missing in action. I feel that he is alive, but have no idea.

**Mrs. Parish:** The last word I had from my husband was

**(Continued on Page 7)**

**Reservists, Military and Civilian Officials at White House Ceremony—(See Story on Page 2)**

## Issues Proclamation of Recognition

# President Nixon Praises Reservists for Performance

*The Reserve forces called to active duty in 1968 were praised by President Nixon in a proclamation issued Dec. 18.*

*At a White House ceremony, attended by Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard and other high-level military and civilian officials, the President applauded the efficiency of the call-up.*

*Following are excerpts from his remarks at the ceremony, and the complete text of the proclamation.*

I appreciate the opportunity to join in this ceremony, and it is one that I wish I could participate in more often, where a proclamation expresses appreciation for service rendered, and where those involved have completed that service and have returned to civilian life, where that is their choice.

I should point out, of course, that you are still in the Reserve. That means that you can still be called, something which I know you understand and something I know which will always be the great tradition in this country.

I think it is worth saying, however, something about the Reserve components that were called up as a result of this proclamation of 1968. . . .

### CITES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thirty-six thousand men have been called up under that proclamation. Twenty-two thousand of those 36,000 served overseas. Those 22,000 received over 4,000 citations, including over 250 Purple Hearts.

This is, it seems to me, eloquent demonstration of the service that is rendered to the United States, not only by our regular forces, and those who are brought into the service through the Selective Service, but also those who are in the Reserves, as are the people who are here.

The Nation is grateful to you, grateful to you for the service you have rendered. The Nation is also grateful to you for the fact that you are in the Reserves, that you are ready, ready to serve the Nation again, as you have in the past. . . .

I should point out, incidentaly, to the secretary, as I see all of this rank in the front row, that I am reminded of the fact that I, too, am in the Reserves, although it is now inactive—I understand inactive, at least.

But, while, because of the position I hold—I hold the rank of commander in chief of our Armed Forces—I realize that except for that election that I would be a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve, showing proper respect to my superiors here in the front row. . . .

## Reserve Recognition Day

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A PROCLAMATION

In January and May of 1968, one hundred and fifteen units from the Reserve Components of the Army, Navy and Air Force were ordered to active duty to quickly augment the Active Forces. This action provided this country with armed strength capability with which to meet possible contingencies that might have arisen as a result of the threats and actions by the North Koreans and the need for additional troops in Vietnam caused by the TET offensive.

Many of these units have served in Vietnam while others have served in Korea, Japan, and the United States. Those units remaining in the United States were primarily used to strengthen the strategic reserve and participate in the Military Airlift Command operations.

By June 18th, Reserve units of the Naval Air Reserve, the Naval Reserve Mobile Construction Battalions (SEABEES), the Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve were demobilized and the units returned to inactive reserve status. The units of the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve have now been released.

All of these Reserve Component units responded to the Nation's call in time of need and established records of performance, both in and out of combat, which have demonstrated a level of readiness and training never before achieved by our reserve forces. In addition, many individual reservists volunteered for active duty during this period. They have truly upheld the heritage and tradition of the citizen soldier and have again proven that both the National Guard and the Reserves are a great resource for our country and one which is necessary to our national security.

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD NIXON,* President of the United States of America, do hereby issue this proclamation in recognition of and appreciation for the patriotic, dedicated and professional service of our loyal members of the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces of the United States.

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF,* I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninety fourth.

A refugee father holds his starving child. A Christmas offensive launched by the Federal forces has created some 130,000 new refugees in the first week of 1970.

***'The U.S. has been at the forefront of international relief efforts for victims on both sides of the battle lines.'***

***'We support the position of the Organization of African Unity that the Nigerian Civil War is a Nigerian and an African problem to be solved by Africans.'***

## Background and U.S. Policy

# NIGERIA—

## *A Nation in Conflict*

Nigeria, formerly a British colony, was granted full independence in 1960. With a parliamentary form of government, a wealth of natural resources, and an ambitious plan for development, her future looked bright.

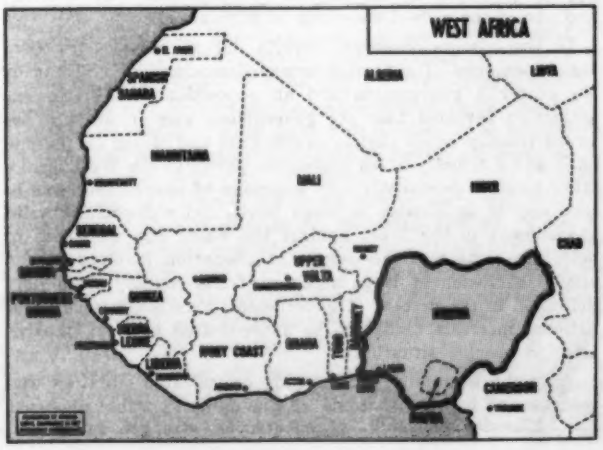
In the beginning, the newly-independent country was a federation of three regions: Northern, Western and Eastern. In 1963 Nigeria proclaimed herself a Federal Republic and added a fourth region: the Midwest.

On Jan. 15, 1966, a small group of army officers attempted to seize power by assassinating the Federal Prime Minister and the Premiers of the Northern and Western Regions. The present Federal Military Government (F.M.G.) emerged as a result of a second military coup on July 29, 1966. Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon (subsequently promoted to major general) became Head of the F.M.G. and Supreme Military Commander, despite the reservations of the Eastern Region.

### Secession of Biafra

Violence in the North in May and September 1966 resulted in the death of several thousand Eastern Nigerians with perhaps a million others moving to the East in the following months. These events, despite efforts at negotiation, led to the proclamation of the East's independence on May 30, 1967, as "the Republic of Biafra" by Lt. Col. C. O. Ojukwu, the regional military governor. On July 6, 1967, fighting broke

(Continued on Next Page)



# The Dilemma of Tribunal Loyalty

(Continued from Preceding Page)

out between the Federal Military Government and the former Eastern Region.

The Nigerian civil war has been fought bitterly ever since. As of the beginning of 1969, Federal forces had reduced the area under secessionist control by three-fourths. Peace talks in May and August-September 1968 broke down, as have later efforts to bring about peace. In the war-ravaged areas there have been critical food shortages and massive refugee problems. The International Committee of the Red Cross, strongly supported by the United States and other nations, have mounted a large international relief effort on both sides.

## No Absolute Right or Wrong

How did these tragic events come to pass?

This question was answered by Joseph Palmer II, then Assistant Secretary of State, in a statement on September 11, 1968, before the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee.

As in most human tragedies, Mr. Palmer pointed out, there is no absolute right and no absolute wrong.

Britain had the choice before independence of dividing Nigeria into its three principal ethnic groups—Ibo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani; into three separate states; or of retaining them as one. The principal proponents of unity at the time were the Ibos, then led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe—American educated, a great African and subsequently the first President of Nigeria.

The more traditional Hausa-Fulani North was doubtful, mistrustful at the time, and strongly inclined to think in terms of partition. But a great Northern leader, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa . . . after seeing what we had done [in the U.S.] in building a nation of people of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and of diverse geographical conditions . . . became convinced Nigeria could do the same.

## Tribal Loyalty: An African Problem

For more than five years, Nigeria showed promise of realizing its potential as the largest (in population—56 million) and one of the richest countries in Africa.

To the outside observer, Nigeria during these years gave the appearance of a parliamentary democracy. There was at the center a government and an opposition. Yet closer examination revealed that the government was an alliance between tribally based parties in the East and North on the one hand and a tribally based opposition partly in the West on the other hand. Subsequently, this marriage of convenience was to give way to an alliance between North and a doubtfully valid government in the West against the East. The weakness in both situations was the degree of alienation involved in the virtual exclusion of large sections of the country from participation in the process of government. Principles, issues, and national interests tended to be subordinated to local imperatives in specific situations.

From the beginning, this already complicated situation was compounded by the positions of the minority tribal elements . . . Minority elements—of substantial strength in and of themselves—were resistant to the efforts of the regionally based parties to try to dominate their regions.

The existing instrument for achieving a national consensus of all these diverse groups was destroyed on Jan. 15, 1966 by a small group of officers—mostly Ibos—who assassinated Sir Abubakar, the Prime Minister of Nigeria. The Premiers of Western and Northern Nigeria were also murdered at the same time.

## Excluded from Participation

The rebels, of course, had their own reasons for acting as they did. They were dissatisfied with the pace of modernization. Decisions were few and far between. Corruption was widespread. And as already indicated, important elements of the population were excluded from participation in the decision-making process.

But even at this point, elements in the army, including Ibos, recognized that events had been carried too far and that the country could be torn apart unless corrective action were taken at once. They therefore stepped in to reassert legality and to try to redress the damage that had been done to the national fabric.

But the effort was too weak and too late.

We have here all the elements of the classic Greek tragedy—the combination of mistakes, misunderstandings, and wrongs that create such emotion, bitterness and alienation as to lead to the darkest of suspicions, ascribed motives and unthinking deeds.

The assassination of General Ironsi [an Ibo, head of the new government], the slaughter of thousands of Ibos in the rest of Nigeria and the flight of well over a million Ibos to their homeland (Biafra) all served eventually to convince some 8 million Ibos that their only hope of survival was in asserting their sovereignty, hopefully in association with some 4 million of the minority tribes that stood between them and the sea, including the rich oil-bearing areas of the Niger Delta.

This final decision to secede came on May 30, 1967 and followed a series of fruitless efforts to compromise differences in a way that would keep the country together.

But if the decision to secede unified the Ibos, it had no less impact on the rest of Nigeria which felt strongly that any concession of the right of secession would irreparably splinter the entire nation.

Furthermore, the decision ran headlong into some deeply held—and strongly articulated—concerns on the part of the rest of Africa.

## U.S. Policy

Since then-Secretary Palmer gave the above analysis of the situation in Nigeria, a new Administration has taken office under President Nixon. Speaking for this Administration, Under Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson analyzed U.S. policy on Nigeria in testimony given on July 15, 1969, before the Subcommittee on Refugees of the U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee. The following excerpts from his statement describe current U.S. policy:

This Administration recognizes that we neither can nor should impose our own moral concepts on other nations. At the same time, we believe the U.S. has an obligation—an ob-

ligation that is internationally recognized—to seek to relieve human suffering in a conflict such as that now going on in Nigeria.

There are really two questions here: First, should we intervene in an effort to bring an end to the fighting and eventually to bring about some sort of political settlement? Second, would such a direct political initiative by the United States serve our immediate and urgent objective of restoring and even increasing relief?

To be concise, a United States political initiative in the civil war must reckon immediately with several obdurate realities:

• At present the two sides show no willingness to agree even on the context for political discussions, let alone terms of a possible settlement. The Federal Military Government has insisted adamantly on the principle of a unified Nigeria as the only basis for settlement. The Biafran authorities have rigidly refused to renounce their claim to independence as a basis for settlement. The Federal Government has insisted on negotiations prior to a ceasefire. The Biafrans have insisted on a ceasefire or truce prior to negotiations.

These positions rest on a hard truth—both sides continue to believe that they can gain by fighting what they might lose by talking. There is, at present, no readiness to compromise. This is the reality that thwarted the . . . OAU mediation effort in Monrovia last April. This is the obstacle that has frustrated numerous unpublicized efforts by third parties.

• The United States has had to face the fact that we have no effective influence with either party to alter these realities.

(Continued on Next Page)

## THE LAND

*Located on the west coast of the African Continent and occupying an area of about 357,000 square miles, Nigeria is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea and on the landward sides by the Federal Republic of Cameroon and the Republics of Chad, Niger, and Dahomey.*

*Four main regions may be distinguished in terms of vegetation, altitude, and climate: (1) the hot, humid coastal belt of mangrove swamp, 10 to 60 miles wide; (2) north of this, a zone from 50 to 100 miles wide of tropical rain forest and oil palm bush; (3) the high, relatively dry central plateau of open woodland and savannah covering the greater part of the northern region; and (4) the extreme north, where semidesert conditions exist. The central plateau rises in places to between 6,000 and 7,000 feet, but there are no significant mountains.*

*Nigeria has several navigable rivers, notably the Niger, the Benue, and the Cross. In addition, the extensive lagoons of the southern coastal area play an important role in transportation and in the economic activity of the area.*

### Climate

*Two seasons, dry and wet, are well marked throughout most of Nigeria. The north's dry season, from October to April, is usually made dusty by Sahara winds. In the south this season extends from November to April, with considerable desert wind in December and January. Rainfall varies from 150 inches per year on the coast to 25 inches or less in the extreme north.*

### Transportation

*Nigeria's two principal ports are located at Lagos and Port Harcourt. Its 5,331 miles of navigable inland waterways, utilizing principally the Niger and Benue Rivers and their tributaries, constitute an extensive waterway system and provide an important means of transportation. Out of a total of 50,000 miles of roads, about 9,500 miles are paved. There are approximately 2,180 miles of railroad tracks transporting the agricultural commodities used for export purposes from the interior to the coast. Since the civil war began, a number of these roads and railroad tracks have been damaged and maintenance has not been kept up. Continued lack of upkeep can eventually affect the country's economy. Nigeria has two airports serviced by international airlines, one of which is Pan American.*

### The Economy

*The economy of Nigeria is built primarily around agriculture, forestry, and animal husbandry and provides about three-fifths of Nigeria's national income. Largely self-sufficient in food production, the country has in the past relied heavily on agricultural exports. Principal exports include crude oil, cocoa, peanuts, palm produce, rubber, cotton, timber and wood products, and hides and skins.*

*Petroleum and natural gas reserves discovered in the Eastern and Midwestern States have provided the major source of foreign exchange, and, as a result, Nigeria may well become one of the 10 largest oil-producing countries in the world within the next few years. The civil war has temporarily ended oil exports from the East, but overall Nigerian petroleum production had reached the prewar level by early 1969.*

*Coal, iron ore, and limestone deposits have created great interest in the possible establishment of an iron and steel industry. On February 15, 1969, a $245 million dam and hydroelectric plant at Kainji on the Niger River was opened, with potential to close to a million kilowatts, thus providing electric power to all parts of Nigeria.*

*Among the larger industries are cement factories, lumber and plywood mills, textile mills, and an oil refinery. Additional cement factories and textile mills, as well as rubber processing plants, are being established.*

*The war has resulted in a decline in total exports and a shortage of foreign exchange, but the Nigerian economy has not been seriously undermined.*

**—Adapted from the State Department's Background Information Notes, "Republic of Nigeria" May 1969.**

(Continued from Preceding Page)

Our influence rests largely on the moral suasion of world opinion. Since both parties see their vital interests at stake, they subordinate the opinion of others to their own concerns and interests. We are not a supplier of arms to either party. This Administration certainly does not intend to alter the arms embargo the United States wisely adopted at the onset of the conflict.

• Finally, we labor under self-imposed limitations, which we

believe have wide support in the U.S. Congress and among the American people. We do not intend to become militarily involved in this conflict.

## The British and the USSR

Beyond this question of influence with the two sides, there are equally serious limits to our ability to influence other parties whose role would be crucial to the end of the conflict.

The British strongly support the Federal side. They have important political and economic interests at stake in Nigeria. The Soviet Union supplies arms to the Federal side. This also constitutes a major political interest in the conflict. [These arms are being sold to the Federal government for cash; they are not being provided as gifts or on a loan basis.]

On the other hand, governments which have given their support to the Biafran cause have done so as a matter of national policy. Thus far we see no sign that the policies of these nations will change, or that the United States could induce such change.

The United Nations has been unable to take up this problem because strong African opposition has precluded the introduction of the Nigerian civil war before the Security Council or the General Assembly.

Within this context, Secretary Richardson said certain specific proposals have been put forward.

First, *an Arms Embargo.* The difficulties of obtaining agreement on this directly relate to the national policies I have just discussed. However, even if agreement could be obtained among major suppliers, an embargo would still be most difficult to enforce. The two parties could readily obtain arms on the international market—as, in fact, they now do. Then, too, our sponsorship of an embargo would be regarded as hostile by at least one side and perhaps both, thereby undercutting whatever effectiveness we may now retain as a mediator on relief. Of course, we would not oppose an arms embargo if one were negotiated.

*Four Power Talks.* We must recognize that there are serious problems here. The day is past when outside powers can impose a peace or redraw the map for the people of Africa. Talks among non-African powers, in and of themselves, are not an answer to the problem.

This brings us to the ultimate political question which has been raised so often in criticism of our official posture toward the Nigerian civil war. Is our relief policy hostage to some deeper political commitment to the unity of Nigeria? And in the same vein, is U.S. recognition of an independent Biafra the answer to our dilemma?

This Administration has tried to consider every aspect of the Nigerian question.

Recognition of an independent Biafra is not a panacea, either for relief, and end to the war, or for the future stability of West Africa. We understand the concern of the Ibo people. We appreciate their insistence on guarantees for their personal safety, just as we appreciate the desire of the Federal Government to restore the high promise of a unified Nigeria. We have repeatedly urged the Federal Military Government to make a precise, unequivocal declaration of these guarantees. [The F.M.G. has now given these guarantees, but Biafran leaders still claim that those who return to the Federal fold will be annihilated.]

Furthermore, recognition would have no tangible effect on the hostilities. To the contrary, it would only harden the positions of both sides, at the risk of rising Soviet influence in Federal Nigeria.

Whatever the course of the present fighting, an independent Biafra could be a source of recurring conflict. Within the territory claimed by the Biafrans there are numerous tribes with a history of hostility to the dominant Ibo tribe. It would be ironic indeed if we validated one claim for self-determination only to incite new and equally bitter irredentisms threatening the stability of the area.

## A Just and Peaceful Reconciliation

This Administration, therefore, does not contemplate either support for or recognition of the secessionist authorities. We regard a peaceful and just reconciliation of Nigeria as in the best interests of Africa and all those, like the United States, who wish her well.

In summary, then, we plan to pursue urgent steps in two directions:

1. Our immediate concern is relief.

2. We shall give continuing support and encouragement to any efforts that might produce constructive talks between the two sides and an end to the fighting. We will be exploring possibilities with other concerned governments in the days and weeks ahead.

The Administration recognizes that the Nigerian tragedy deeply concerns the Congress and the American public. We share this concern and we welcome every suggestion in the common interest of saving lives.

**COMMANDERS DIGEST**

**THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS OFFICIAL INFORMATION, NEWS AND POLICY, DIRECT FROM WASHINGTON AUTHORIZED SOURCES.**

**Published weekly by American Forces Press Service, 1117 N. 19th St., Arlington, Va. 22209, a unified activity of the Office of Information for the Armed Forces, OASD (M&RA). Reproduction of content is authorized. Suggested dateline for materials used is WASHINGTON (AFPS).**

Richard Capen

Katherin Plowman (left), and Candace Parish

(Continued from Page 1)

written the day before he was shot down—July 24, 1968. I have had no word since then.

*"What we have," Mr. Capen explained, "are hundreds of families who do not know whether or not their husbands, fathers, or sons are even alive."*

**Mrs. Plowman:** He was flying at night. It was impossible to see just exactly what happened. The name of his fellow crewmember has been learned, but my husband's name has never come out.

**Mrs. Parish:** Other pilots saw my husband's aircraft in a steep dive. They tried, but failed, to make radio contact. Because of that, the other pilots thought the crew got out before the attempt at radio contact.

*More than 400 of the total have been listed as prisoners or carried as missing in action for more than three and a half years. Several have been prisoners or listed as missing for more than five years. "This is longer than any U.S. serviceman was held prisoner during World War II," Mr. Capen noted.*

**Mrs. Plowman:** I have written a letter to him every month since March 1967 through the International Red Cross. I also have sent letters to him in care of the Post Office in Hanoi. I have never received any of these letters back, but I don't know if he has ever gotten any of them.

**Mrs. Parish:** I have sent him packages and have written him every month through the Hanoi Post Office and the International Red Cross. I do not know if he has received the packages or letters. I doubt that he has.

*"This issue transcends international boundaries, and it transcends any political differences," Mr. Capen said. "And we have found that individuals in the United States, whether in favor of the war or not, and nations abroad that may not support the United States on the war in Vietnam, agree that there is no way that the inhumane attitudes of North Vietnam can be justified by anyone's standards."*

**Mrs. Plowman:** I have written the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris several times. I have written to the President of North Vietnam. I have not received a response.

**Mrs. Parish:** I was with a group of four other wives and a father-in-law who went to Paris to meet with the North Vietnamese. They showed us two films. Both of them were propaganda films—one about napalm and the other about the release of prisoners in August 1968. The members of the delegation we talked with said they would forward the information we gave them to Hanoi. They said we would hear from Hanoi. I have heard nothing.

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird is vitally concerned about the inhuman treatment of our men at the hands of the enemy, and he assured the families that their loved ones will not be forgotten, Mr. Capen said.

"With that in mind, we have determined that the American public should be aware of the plight of these wives and parents, and the inhuman treatment of the men.

"We felt that in addition to discussing the problem in public, and making the American people aware of the situation, that we wanted to personally meet with the families. As a result, several of us have gone around the country visiting with about 1,500 wives and parents."

**Mrs. Plowman:** We have a son who was born two months after my husband was shot down. I have sent several pictures to him in packages and letters, but I do not know if he has received them.

**Mrs. Parish:** We have a little boy who was two weeks old when his father was shot down. I continue to write and send pictures, and I just hope that if he ever gets a letter that they will give him the pictures, too.

Mr. Capen remarked he wished there was more of a success story to report. "We have been grateful for the fact that many newspapers, magazines and television programs have focused so much attention upon the plight of our men, and the tragic circumstances of uncertainty that surround the lives of the families.

"We are going to continue to explore every opportunity that is available to us. We are going to continue to make the American people aware of this problem, and we are going to continue to do all we can to assist the families."

## FIRST-HAND REPORT:

# Advantages of Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carriers

*January 1970 marks the 15th anniversary of nuclear propulsion in the United States Navy. One of the most important programs in the Department of Defense related to the use of atomic power is the Navy's carrier program. The keel of the Navy's second nuclear powered attack carrier, the Nimitz, and the first of a new class, was laid at Newport News, Va., in June 1968. Construction of a second nuclear carrier of the Nimitz design was authorized by the 90th Congress this fiscal year.*

*Following are excerpts from an interview with Rear Admiral James L. Holloway, III, the director of Strike Warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Admiral Holloway is the Navy's top aircraft carrier manager, serving as program coordinator of the nuclear powered aircraft carrier program.*

**Q. What are the advantages of nuclear power in a carrier?**

A. The principal advantage of nuclear propulsion, as in any surface ship, is that it enables the carrier to steam at high speed for virtually unlimited distance without refueling. In the carrier there are important additional benefits. Because the nuclear carrier does not have to carry black oil for propulsion, there is more room in the ship's hull for aviation fuel and other combat consumables. This gives the nuclear carrier greatly increased combat staying power in comparison to its conventional counterpart. For example, Nimitz will carry more than twice as much jet fuel as the Forrestal, and almost twice as much aviation ordnance. These two qualities give the attack carrier a unique capability. This is the ability to:

- *Respond immediately to contingencies beyond the range of emplaced U.S. forces without waiting for supporting units or prepositioning of logistic support.*
- *Conduct combat operations while closing the objective area.*
- *Continue combat operations without support or replenishment for the period of time required to establish sea-based logistic support lines.*

**Q. Is it possible to gain these advantages of nuclear power for our older carriers by installing reactor propulsion plants?**

A. It is technically possible, but neither practical nor economical. It would cost about as much to put nuclear power in an older carrier as it would to construct a new one. This is because the propulsion plant of a carrier is deep in the ship, surrounded by armor and protective compartments. The amount of labor involved in taking the old ship apart, installing the reactor plant, and reassembling the ship would be enormous. For about the same price the Navy could have a new carrier with a much longer lifetime.

**Q. Are we making any breakthroughs in the use of atomic energy for ship propulsion?**

A. There have been great, almost spectacular, advances in nuclear reactor technology in the past 15 years. For example, Enterprise, our first nuclear powered aircraft carrier, had eight reactors, and the initial fuel cores provided power for three years before replacement was necessary. Nimitz, slightly larger than Enterprise, will have two reactors, and the initial cores will furnish energy to propel the ship for thirteen years. So it can be said that the advance in reactor technology from the Enterprise design to the Nimitz has permitted a fourfold increase in power *and* in endurance. In addition, going from eight to two reactors in the carrier will permit a reduction in operating personnel which represents a valuable economy in highly skilled technical manpower.

**Q. We hear occasionally of the hazards of nuclear power plants, particularly the radiation dangers; do you consider the U.S. Navy's reactor plant designs to be safe?**

A. Yes, they are safe. From the beginning of the reactor program Vice Admiral H. G. Rickover has insisted that safety be a primary consideration in both the design and operation of his naval reactors. One graphic example comes to mind. When the Enterprise was anchored in port in Hong Kong, we detected a measurable level of radioactivity on the flight deck. There was no similar activity internally to the ship, even in the propulsion plant compartments. Upon investigation, we determined that the flight deck level of radioactivity was prevalent throughout the Hong Kong area, and was the result of fallout from A-bomb tests many thousands of miles away. So it can be stated as a matter of fact that the nuclear propulsion plant operators aboard the Enterprise were subjected to a lower level of radioactivity than the average citizen of Hong Kong, walking the streets of their city.

**Q. What is the status of the nuclear carrier program today?**

A. We have, of course, the USS Enterprise which joined the fleet in 1962 and has had an active career since that time, participating in the Cuban quarantine of 1962, making two deployments to the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet, and four combat tours to Vietnam. There are three nuclear powered attack carriers approved for construction in the Department of Defense Five Year Plan. To acquire these three carriers at least cost they are being built to the same design and procured on a modified multi-year contract from a single shipbuilder. The keel was laid on the first of these ships, the Nimitz, in June of 1968, at Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company. Authorization and funding to complete the second Nimitz class carrier was included in the military appropriations bill just signed by the President.

The Navy plans to request the first increment of funding for the third carrier in Fiscal Year 1971. The acquisition of these ships will substantially modernize the Navy's carrier force and enable it to cope with the improving Soviet weapons technology.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.
Price 5 cents (single copy). Subscription Price: $2.50 per year; $3.25 additional for foreign mailing.
☆U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1969 393/218/S-27

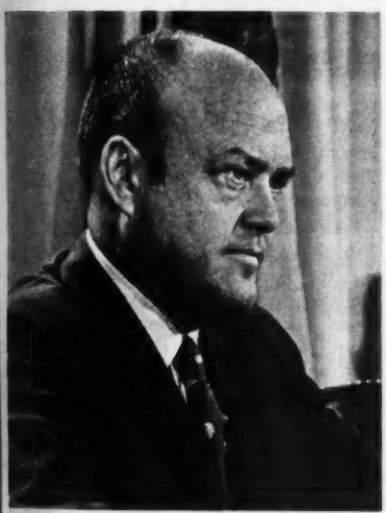
# COMMANDERS DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE • WASHINGTON, D.C.

JAN 29 1970

DOCUMENTS DIVISION

Vol. 7, No. 16 January 17, 1970

**Secretary Laird**
*"This matter of threat is now being assessed . . ."*

## Secretary Laird Cites Soviet Missile Threat; Discusses ABM, Vietnamization, Spending

The United States will "undoubtedly" have to review its offensive strategic weapons systems if the Soviets continue deployment of the SS–9 missile at the present rate, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird said at the Pentagon Jan. 7.

He indicated the Soviet Union could have a missile force of about 420 SS–9s in readiness earlier than the 1974 period he forecast to Congress last summer.

Secretary Laird did not say how many SS–9s are in place or under construction, nor how much earlier they would be ready.

". . . We will be prepared to go into that during the hearings before the Congressional committees. As you know, this whole situation of threat is under review now, under review as I prepare for my first appearance before the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is under review in connection with our ABM work, and the ABM program for next year and what we will be presenting to Congress in that area.

"This matter of the threat is now being assessed in connection with our posture statement, in connection with the presentation we will be making to Congress and in connection with our 1971 budget statement."

Asked what offensive weapons programs of the United States could be reviewed, Mr. Laird said:

"There are several possibilities that

(Continued on Page Two)

## Chaplain Kelly: 'Our Serviceman's Courage and Valor On the Field Of Battle Is Matched By His Humanitarian Concern'

The "humanitarian concern" of our serviceman in Vietnam, which matches his "courage and valor on the field of battle," are stories seldom reported by newsmen, Rear Admiral (chaplain) James W. Kelly, chief of chaplains, U.S. Navy, told members of the press Jan. 7 in Washington.

Chaplain Kelly, who recently returned from a visit to Southeast Asia, which included Christmas with servicemen in Vietnam, emphasized the tremendous humanitarian efforts being made—apart from the actual fighting.

"I am aware," he said, "that much of our public opinion has been polarized into the generally accepted 'hawk' and 'dove' positions. At the same time, there are many Americans, who, in deep concern, are raising questions which indicate their open-mindedness and their search for information which will help them reach or revise personal judgments about the critical issues regarding the war in Vietnam."

He noted that Americans are fed a "daily ration of news media coverage" of the more sensational aspects of combat and body count statistics. "But, do they really appreciate what our Marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen are involved in that motivated 10,000 sailors and 40,000 Marines to request extensions of six months or longer in Vietnam?" (Extensions by members of the other Services include: Air Force, 11,500; and Army, 92,500.)

Quoting a United Presbyterian minister, who had been to Vietnam three times, Chaplain Kelly commented, "The average American has little factual knowledge concerning the human needs of the people of this long-denied country, nor does he know what the majority of our servicemen know about what is being done to meet these needs. . . . The response of our young people to the crying needs of fellow human beings. It seems to me that there is a tremendous Peace Corps within the military establishment represented by thousands of young people deeply involved in a most significant effort to save lives, and to give hope and opportunity to thousands of eager but deprived people."

Stressing this was his fifth visit to Vietnam in as many

(Continued on Page Six)